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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 000219

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [MASS](#) [MARR](#)
SUBJECT: GENERAL WARD'S MEETING WITH MALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER

REF: BAMAKO 00217

Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson, Embassy Bamako, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Prior to the meeting with President Amadou Toumani Toure (reftel), the Ambassador and General Ward met separately with Defense Minister Natie Pleah and senior Malian military leaders. While it appeared the Ministry had decided, or been instructed, to save most issues for the meeting with the President, several notable items were addressed by either the Malian or the US side. The Minister only exchanged pleasantries which included his deep appreciation for US military assistance. Toward the end of the meeting, however, he opened the floor to his senior officers.

2.(C) Colonel Sacafourou Gueye, Chief of Military Cooperation, requested more training slots for Malian officers in the United States. Chief of the General Staff General Seydou Traore praised the success of the December 2007 Air JCET and asked for more exchanges of this nature in the future.

3.(C) General Ward responded by noting that because IMET is a State Department program, his influence is limited in terms of training opportunities in the U.S. He agreed to look into the matter, however. He also highlighted the following points:

-- the US has requested a combined assessment of the Gao airfield in northern Mali to determine its suitability for heavy aircraft (C-5 and C-17).

-- the US and Mali invoked our Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) to execute the aerial re-supply of the Tinzawaten garrison in 2007. Reciprocal provisions have to be settled. General Traore replied that the US parachutes were now back in Bamako. Mali must respond in kind no later than 10 Sep 2008.

4.(C) Comment: Colonel Gueye's request for more U.S. based training is consistent across the Malian military. We concur and support the Malian military's desire for increased levels of IMET training. While Mali is now a EUCOM/AFRICOM high priority country within the context of the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership, this shift in regional and continent-wide priorities has not been reflected in IMET or its management (i.e. the need for a security assistance office). We will continue to rely on AFRICOM, EUCOM, and SOCEUR assistance to ensure ACSA requirements are satisfied without assigning a monetary value to a service the Malian government has previously provided free-of-charge. Mission will notify all parties as soon as we recover the airdrop

equipment (parachutes, netting and 463L pallets) from the
Maliens.

15. (U) General Ward has cleared this message.
MCCULLEY